



GLOBAL UPDATE ON THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

Global and our affiliates have received numerous inquiries about whether or not people with Down syndrome are more at risk than typical people when it comes to exposure to the COVID-19 coronavirus. Many inquiries are related to health risks and many are also related to spring break travel on planes. With COVID-19 coronavirus being categorized as an [official pandemic](#) by the World Health Organization, and after discussing with our affiliates, at this moment in time we are comfortable providing the following information.

1. Are all people with Down syndrome “High Risk”?

While there is no evidence about how people with Down syndrome are affected by coronavirus versus the typical population, the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) and [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) have categorized certain groups of people as “high risk” in terms of how coronavirus can negatively affect their health:

- a. Older adults
- b. People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
Heart disease, Diabetes, Obesity, Lung disease, and/or
Respiratory Difficulties

2. Some Precautions to Consider from the NIH & CDC

We do know that people with Down syndrome are [more likely than typical people to have such chronic medical conditions listed above](#), and as such, following the NIH and CDC precautions should be considered. You can read about those precautions on the NIH and CDC government websites. For individuals considered “high risk” the websites both recommend “Avoid all non-essential travel including plane trips, and especially avoid embarking on cruise ships” amongst many other recommendations.

3. Extra Precautions to Consider Based on Research

There is research from the [CDC](#) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) that points to people with Down syndrome being more likely to develop complications due to respiratory viral infections including H1N1 and RSV, and increased rates of hospitalization. Given this research, if you as an individual with Down syndrome, your child with Down syndrome, or your dependent adult with Down syndrome has a respiratory infection, is just recovering from a respiratory infection, has chronic respiratory issues or pulmonary viral infections, you may want to consider taking the same precautions that would apply to someone who is “high risk.”

Some Basic But Important CDC and NIH recommendations to Consider

1. Avoid close contact and stay home when sick – Read about steps to preventing the illness [via the CDC website](#). Please take note:
 - Stay home when you are feeling sick (e.g. fever, cough, itchy throat, chills, etc.).
 - Notify a healthcare provider if you are experiencing symptoms.
 - Put in extra measures to put more physical distance between yourself and others.
2. Practice good hygiene. Read about the importance of handwashing [via the CDC website](#). Below are some highlights:
 - Wash your hands with soap and water regularly for 20 seconds.
 - Practice [cough and sneezing etiquette](#), always cover your mouth and nose when sneezing, coughing with a tissue or into the crook of your elbow.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.